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The three educational philosophers/schools of thought that appealed to me are progressivism, humanism, and constructivism. I feel like I can relate to all of these philosophies because they each represent something that I agree with when it comes to how I learn. Constructivism relates to me because I am a kinesthetic learner. Being that constructivism emphasizes linking personal meaning to hands on and activity based teaching, it is the best theory in which for me to learn. I like that teachers can give their students their own time to discover and find out information for themselves. I also agree with the fact that a classroom should be an environment where students are listening to their peers, and respectful of what each other has to share. I believe that there is a balance in learning between developing as a person individually, and developing as person as a member of society in a whole. There are things that everyone learns because they have to, but what students learn on their own can set them apart from the standard curriculum.

The next philosophy that I agree strongly with is humanism. Humanism is all about “enhancing the innate goodness of the individual.” The only aspect of humanism that I disagree with is about group learning. I believe that there needs to be a 50/50 balance between group learning and individual learning. Like constructivism, humanism also involves having a respectful classroom as well as freedom to explore what is interesting to the individual. I believe that students should be able to develop and answer their own questions through learning and observing. I find that I personally learn best using these two methods. I am usually best when I can observe and figure things out for myself. I like investigations, problem solving, and doing activities that require me to think and work on skills that aren’t so typical. For example, in my EDC 312 class we were told to take out a piece of paper, work together as a group to create a ‘flying device’ that would travel the farthest when thrown. Many groups made paper airplanes because that is what is considered to be the norm when asked to make something that flies when given paper. However, my group and a few others were able to figure out that simply squishing the paper into a ball would make it go farther than probably any airplane. I love these kinds of assignments because it allows for me to think outside the box as well as learn from what other people decided to do with their paper. I frequently find myself doing things the ‘wrong’ way and end up having it turn out better than if I had done it the ‘right’ way. It’s one of my favorite ways of learning.

The last philosophy that I chose is progressivism. I enjoy that progressivism also relates back to how I like to learn. Questions from the learner should be what drives education. Ideas should be tested by experimentation and answers to questions should be explored by the individual seeking the answer. I also believe that schools should prepare students for change. The world we live in changes all the time and students need to learn how to adapt and change with it. Encouraging divergent thinking is also a good thing because it allows students to develop themselves and their ideas. They can go beyond what is the conventional method and figure out what works best for them. Memorization and rote practice are not techniques that are particularly stressed in this philosophy. I have to agree with this also because although I can memorize information and recall it, I don’t also know how to apply it. I think of this kind of like baking. You can memorize Step One as “Set the oven to 350 degrees” but if you don’t actually know how to turn the oven on, you won’t be able to make the recipe. Memorization a rote practice is great for quickly being able to recall information when needed but, when applying it, it’s almost useless. I always find that experiments and other hands on activities always have a deeper meaning to me than just having to memorize information about a subject.